

Week of December 2, 2002: MaineDOT Flash Facts

Topic: Driver Courtesy

Openers:

- There are no statistics on how often driver discourtesy happens on the road, but everyone can recall instances where the other driver (intentionally or not) was behaving badly. And that behavior often puts that driver and others in danger.
- What can even a minor act of discourtesy cause in other road users?
 - Loss of concentration on their normal driving
 - Anger
 - Retaliation
 - Road rage
 - CRASHES!!!
- Driving may seem like an individual activity since you have the controls and you sit in your protective shell. But think about it... driving is a group activity that takes cooperation, positive communication and common courtesy.

The concept of courtesy probably is not the first item on your safe driving list, but without it, driving would be chaotic and simply dangerous.

Monday

Tips:

Be a Road Model and remember the following when driving:

- Use directional signals in advance of turns and lane changes
- Obey all traffic signs and signals
- Dim your bright headlights for the car ahead
- Flash your lights to warn other traffic of upcoming danger (a crash or some other traffic tie up that may not be immediately apparent or an animal close to crossing the road)
- Maintain a safe following distance

Wednesday

Tips:

Be a Road Model and remember the following when driving:

- Allow faster moving traffic to pass
- Maintain proper following distance (no tailgating)
- Merge properly (avoid the "me first" approach and smoothly blend with the flow of traffic)
- Give the right of way at appropriate situations (stop signs, yield signs, right on red, pedestrian crossings)
- Travel at a safe speed
- Keep bicyclists and pedestrians safe

Friday**Tips:**

On the road courtesy will largely depend on two driver factors:

1. Attention to the driving task. (Inattention or distractions will lead to driving errors seen as discourtesy by other drivers)
2. Emotions or mood (can lead to an aggressive, "it's all about me" driving style. Courtesy is often forgotten when the driver is emotional)

So, once behind the wheel, check your attitude. Make sure your mind is on the driving.

Drive defensively and watch out for problems with "the other vehicle". Avoid having their mistake become your problem.

Flash, the MaineDOT spokesperson says "Be a Road Model."